

From: Elia Hamelin
Sent: Tuesday, December 7, 2021 10:27 AM
To: clerk@hamilton.ca
Cc: Hamilton Encampment Support Network <info@hesn.ca>
Subject: December 8th General Issues Meeting

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter with the hope that it will be read aloud in the General Issues Meeting on December 8th, speaking to the topic of the Hate Prevention, Mitigation, and Community Initiatives Action Plan. Recommendations in this plan that I would like to bring to light include for the city to work with existing equity-seeking groups and groups disadvantaged by discrimination and to be proactive and timely in response to incidents of hate, as well as to participate in larger societal goals and responsibilities. As a resident of Hamilton Centre who has forged relationships with many of my unhoused neighbours in the city, I wanted to express my support for those same neighbours and also the members of the Encampment Support Network. Organizers at the Hamilton ESN have continued to fill in the gaps where the city and its lack of services have allowed unhoused people and those living in encampments to fall through the cracks. City staff and Hamilton Police Services continue to displace, harass, and enact violence on these residents -- what I would consider a huge failure after looking at the goals outlined in this action plan. The City and Police approach lacks empathy and humanity. I am calling for the city to provide realistic alternatives to shelters and shelter hotels, which are not permanent or viable options for my fellow Hamiltonians. Hamilton's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan is also noted on the Hate Prevention, Mitigation, and Community Initiatives Action Plan and I would like to note that it is the responsibility of the city to provide permanent housing to people who are currently unhoused, as well as improve the housing crisis in Hamilton more broadly. People will suffer this winter, as we have seen for many winters, without free, permanent housing.

The action plan also states that the city would like for equity-seeking communities feel safe, supported, and feel a sense of belonging in Hamilton. This speaking point is in direct conflict with the events that took place at JC Beemer and the Central Police Station in late November 2021 that I would absolutely categorize as hateful. I denounce the Hamilton Police Service's violent attacks and subsequent arrests of HESN organizers that took place. I am calling for all those violently arrested to have their charges dropped and for HPS's misconduct to be taken seriously and responded to promptly by the City of Hamilton. The brutality and extreme force used by HPS was not surprising, as it aligns with their approach on many other occasions. HPS continues to be a disappointment in their treatment of unhoused people, Black people, and many vulnerable groups in the city. Their grossly inflated budget could be used to save people's lives this winter by providing housing.

Thank you,

Lia Hamelin